

Bahraini Hiring Drives Financial Sector Job Growth

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Bahraini workers accounted for all of the net job growth in the financial sector in the first three months of 2026, as the workforce rose to 14,880 and Bahrainisation hit 70 pc despite the march towards digital banking.

The number of Bahrainis working across the industry climbed by 97 in three months, from 10,321 to 10,418, while the number of foreign workers fell by one to 4,462, according to Central Bank of Bahrain figures.

Total employment rose by 96 from 14,784 in the final quarter of 2025. The figures show hiring holding up even as bank branches dwindle and customers shift towards apps, online transfers and contactless payments.

Bahrainisation has risen quarter by quarter. It stood at 69.5 pc in the second quarter of 2025, 69.7 pc in the third and 69.8 pc in the fourth before reaching 70 pc at the end of March.

Banks employed 7,235 people in the first quarter, up from 7,208 three months earlier. Bahrainis held 5,715 of those jobs, including 3,419 men and 2,296 women. Another 1,520 posts were held by foreign workers, comprising 1,276 men and 244



Financial Sector at a Glance	
• 14,880	Total financial-sector workforce in Q1 2026
• 10,418	Bahraini employees
• 4,462	Foreign employees
• 70%	Bahrainisation rate
• +96	Net jobs added in the first quarter
• +97	Increase in Bahraini employment
• -1	Change in foreign employment
• 7,235	Total banking-sector employees
• 5,715	Bahrainis working in banks
• 6,907	Employees in the non-bank financial sector
• 5,115	Women employed across the financial sector
• 81.5%	Approximate share of female financial-sector workers who are Bahraini
• +18.3%	Growth in POS and e-commerce transaction volumes in H2 2025
• 78.1%	Share of POS transactions made through contactless payments
• -15.1%	Decline in average ATM transactions in H2 2025

women.

Retail banks employed 5,204 people, up from 5,183, while wholesale banks had 2,001 workers, against 1,996 in the previous quarter. Representative offices employed 30 people.

Jobs also rose outside banking. The non-bank financial sector employed 6,907 people, up from 6,875, including 4,084 Bahrainis and 2,823 foreign workers. Insurance and reinsurance companies had 1,556

employees, of whom 1,188 were Bahraini and 368 were foreign workers. Firms working in insurance-related activities employed another 981 people.

Financial-sector support bodies recorded one of the sharpest gains, with staff numbers rising from 701 to 738. Investment business firms moved the other way, with employment slipping from 688 to 685.

Women held 5,115 jobs across the financial sector. Bahrainis accounted for 4,168 of them, or roughly 81.5 pc of the female workforce.

The rise comes as banking habits keep moving away from the counter. During the second half of 2025, the average daily number of Favri+ transactions rose 9.6 pc from a year earlier, while average ATM transactions fell 15.1 pc.

Point-of-sale and e-commerce transaction volumes climbed 18.3 pc over the same period. Contactless payments made up 78.1 pc of point-of-sale transactions.

Yet the longer view is flatter. The sector employed 14,892 people in the first quarter of 2025, 12 above the latest figure. The latest numbers therefore show a quarter-on-quarter rebound rather than year-on-year job growth, with the rise driven by Bahraini hiring.

Small Data Leaks Can Expose State Security

Al Assoomi Warns of Espionage Risk From Data Leaks

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A photograph, an employee's name or even the time of a meeting can help a foreign power map a country's weak spots, Shura Council member Adel Al Assoomi has warned, saying small scraps of data can become weapons in the wrong hands.

The former Arab Parliament president said collusion with a foreign state was among the gravest threats to national security because it struck at sovereignty and attacked the state from within.

'Small information builds the big picture,' Al Assoomi said.

He warned that a single detail might look harmless on its own. But when photographs, names, locations, meeting times and social media posts are collected and studied together, they can reveal infrastructure, future plans and security gaps.

Open-source intelligence methods had made such scraps far easier to piece together, he said, raising the stakes for public servants and ordinary citizens alike.

'Protecting national security begins with protecting information and loyalty to the homeland, as they are the first line of defence,' he said.

Al Assoomi said legislative institutions must update laws to de-



“Information is the first line of defence.”
-ADEL AL ASSOOMI,
SHURA COUNCIL MEMBER

ter espionage and the leaking of state secrets, while keeping pace with new risks in information security and artificial intelligence.

He said they must also oversee executive bodies to ensure cybersecurity rules and data-protection standards are properly applied.

Schools, universities and the media had a part to play too, teaching people that protecting information was a shared civic duty rather than a task left to security agencies.

He also called for greater awareness of rumours and foreign influence campaigns, saying examples of how such efforts had been countered could help build public resistance to them.

'The goal is to transform the protection of the homeland from a slogan into a daily behaviour for every individual,' Al Assoomi said.

Talent Without Borders

Piano Prodigy, Chinese Champion and Tennis Ace Take Centre Stage

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Three Bahraini students have been highlighted in the Education Ministry's "Our Students Inspiring Stories" campaign, showcasing achievements in music, languages, technology and sport.

Abdulrahman Khalid Isa, a third-year intermediate student at Al Hala Intermediate Boys School, was recognised from an early age for his musical talent and unusual ability to listen to a piece of music and reproduce it accurately on the piano. His school subsequently enrolled him in its gifted pupils pro-

gramme.

His interests extend beyond music. Abdulrahman has developed skills in Python, C++, JavaScript and CSS, alongside web development, artificial intelligence and electrical engineering. He has also won first place in the intermediate schools debate competition and an English speaking competition organised by Hidd Intermediate Boys School, in addition to singing in English.

Sara Mansoor Abdulla of Sitra Secondary Girls School won first place in Bahrain's Chinese Bridge competition for secondary students, earning the opportunity to represent the kingdom



Abdulrahman Khalid Isa, Sara Mansoor Abdulla and Abbas Nabeel Ebrahim

at the world finals in China.

The competition is one of the major international events for students learning Chinese. Sara has also participated in drawing and poetry competitions, athletics and fitness events, and won second place in her school's science experiments competition. She volunteered at the 2025 Asian Youth Games and Sports Day 2026, reflecting her belief in the importance of active participation in society.

Meanwhile, Abbas Nabeel Ebrahim of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib Primary Intermediate Boys School has built a promising career in tennis from a young age.

After being registered by his family at a Bahrain Tennis Federation talent festival, Abbas attracted attention for his understanding of the sport's fundamentals and his physical abilities. He was subsequently selected among the federation's promising young players.

He entered his first national tennis championship at the age of eight and has since attended training camps in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Hungary

and Serbia.

His achievements include winning the Ebrahim Khalil Kanoo championships in the under-eight and under-12 categories, the under-12 doubles title and the BBK under-12 tournament. He was also runner-up at the Riffa Views under-12 competition and has represented Bahrain twice at the Ten-Pro international tournament.

Abbas has also excelled in football, training with Bahrain's age-group squad and winning titles with Al Maameer Club's football academy. He has been named both best player and top scorer in several competitions.

You may not catch it in the pool - but on the way to the changing room

Damp floors, shared facilities and poor hygiene can pose a greater fungal infection risk than properly disinfected pool water

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Hasan Barakat

Swimming pools are generally considered safe when properly maintained, but the greatest risk of fungal infection may come not from the water itself, but from the damp surfaces surrounding the pool and changing rooms.

Public health consultant Dr Kawthar Al Eid said properly disinfected pool water is unlikely to transmit fungal infections. Instead, infections are more commonly picked up through bare feet on wet floors, shared towels and slippers, contaminated surfaces and prolonged moisture on the skin, particularly between the toes.

The distinction is important because it shifts attention from the pool water to hygiene prac-



“A safe pool depends on both operators and swimmers.”
-DR KAWTHAR AL EID, HEALTH CONSULTANT

tices and how swimming facilities are managed.

A properly disinfected and well-maintained pool carries a very low risk of infection, Dr Al

Eid said. However, the risk can increase when disinfection is inadequate, chlorine or pH levels fall outside required limits, or people enter the water while carrying an infection.

Common illnesses associated with swimming environments include fungal skin infections, outer ear infections caused by water remaining trapped in the ear canal, and folliculitis. The latter is often linked to the bacterium *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and can appear as itchy red spots on the skin.

Red eyes are also frequently reported by swimmers. While they can be caused by infection, they may also result from irritation associated with chlorine or poor water quality. Everyday behaviour can also influence the risk.

Entering the pool without showering first, swimming while

suffering from diarrhoea or an infectious skin condition, walking barefoot around shared facilities, sharing towels, swallowing pool water and failing to dry properly can all increase the chances of infection.

Children require additional attention, including the use of swim nappies where appropriate.

Simple precautions can significantly reduce the risks. Swimmers should shower with soap before and after entering the pool, wear sandals around the pool area and changing rooms, and dry themselves thoroughly, especially between the toes.

Towels should never be shared, while anyone who is unwell should stay out of the water. Swimmers should also avoid swallowing pool water, cover cuts with waterproof dressings and use goggles when appropriate.

Social Development Minister Visits Youth City



Minister of Social Development Osama bin Saleh Al Alawi visited Youth City 2030 to review its programmes and initiatives aimed at developing young people's skills and capabilities and preparing them for the future.

Minister of Youth Affairs Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi was present during the visit.

The minister was briefed on the city's main centres and programmes, including the Science and Technology Centre, Arts and Culture Centre, Leadership and Entrepreneurship Centre, Media and Entertainment Centre and Summer Sports City.

The centres provide young people with training and practical experiences across a range of fields.

Al Alawi described Youth City 2030 as an advanced national model for investing in youth potential, praising its diverse programmes and opportunities to develop skills, talents and practical experience.

He highlighted the positive outcomes of the programmes, particularly their contribution to strengthening young people's skills, self-confidence, teamwork and sense of responsibility, while helping them transform their ideas into tangible projects and initiatives.